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Analysing The Portrayal of Male and Female Villains in Indian (Hindi) Television Serials

: A Study on 'Sirf Tum'

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Tables of Contents

Content	Pg No.
1. Acknowledgment	3
2. Abstract	4
3. Introduction	5-9
4. Review of Literature	11-16
5. Methodology	18-21
6. Findings and Analysis	23-63
7. Conclusion	65-67
8. Bibliography	68-69

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ABSTRACT

Indian Television Serials have been a staple in household entertainment throughout the years. Even today, with access to OTT entertainment, web series and international shows, Indian serials and soap operas still enjoy a prominent position in our lives. If looked at from the perspective of viewership, television rating points are also considerably high, in spite of the various other options available to the Indian viewers. A standard feature of Indian television serials are the character archetypes in each. Almost every character fits into a specific archetype or mould, displaying a repeated set of character traits. An important archetype in almost every television serial is the antagonist or the villain. This character often drives the story forward by creating obstacles for the other characters. This study aims to study the portrayal of villains in the TV serial 'Sirf Tum', and to understand the elements that make a character positive or negative in Indian TV serials, and how these criteria differ in male and female characters.

Introduction

Communication and Storytelling: How Films and Series Shape Narratives

Communication and storytelling are age old tools used in shaping narratives and influencing human understanding. Storytelling taps into the human psyche. It is a communication method that engages emotions, and creates memorable connections. The art of shaping narratives involves crafting a cohesive and compelling structure, drawing the audience into a world where characters, plots, and themes unfold with purpose. Whether conveyed through spoken words, written prose, or visual media, effective storytelling captivates the audience, guiding them intellectually and emotionally. Storytelling provides a relatable framework that resonates with diverse audiences, sometimes even transcending cultural and linguistic barriers. For instance, stories like the Arabian Nights are known worldwide, though they speak of particular cultures. A more recent example, Korean dramas have gained massive popularity around the globe in recent times.

Effective communicators recognize that stories have a unique ability to make information memorable and relatable. By embedding messages within narratives, communicators enhance comprehension and retention, since it has been proven that the human brain is wired to connect with stories. The art of shaping narratives in communication involves not only selecting the right stories but also employing the appropriate medium—be it oral, written, or visual—to amplify the impact. The visual medium, with its combination of cinematography, sound design, and compelling performances, provides a captivating platform for intricate storytelling.

Films and series emerge as powerful techniques that elevate narrative shaping to new heights. In films and series, narratives unfold not just through words but through images, emotions, and nuanced expressions. The incorporation of storytelling in the visual medium enables the exploration of multifaceted characters, intricate plot developments, and cultural nuances. Films and series have the unique ability to transcend temporal and spatial boundaries, transporting viewers to different eras, locations, and imaginative realms. As a storytelling technique, films and series not only entertain but also serve as a dynamic force in influencing perspectives and fostering cultural understanding.

<u>What are Indian Serials/ Daily Soaps?</u>

Indian serials, also known as Indian television dramas or daily soaps, are characterized by an extended run and daily episodes, sometimes barring weekends. They attract a broad and heterogeneous audience, ranging from urban to rural viewers across all ages. While Indian soaps are mostly believed to be aimed towards women, the content is never exclusive to them and can be viewed by both men and women.

The production values of Indian serials often vary, but they often share common characteristics, such as elaborate sets, vibrant and heavy costumes, and exaggerated storytelling. The melodramatic acting and storytelling, especially, is a defining feature, with heightened emotions and intense plot twists that keep its viewers engaged.

These serials have played an undeniable role in India's entertainment landscape for decades.

<u>Evolution of Indian Serials</u>

Television in India began in the late 1950s as an experiment and broadcasted only two one-hour educational programs per week. The 1970s saw the establishment of several television centres, with Doordarshan emerging as the largest among them. Small screen programming started in India in the early 1980s when Doordarshan, the sole national channel owned by the government, came to the forefront. It aired religious and mythological shows like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, which were the first major television series produced.

Other serials such as "Hum Log" (1984), delved into the lives of Indian families and their everyday struggles, while "Buniyaad" (1986-87) explored the partition of India in 1947 and its profound aftermath. "Fauji" (1989) provided a unique insight into the rigorous training of the Indian army commandos. In the comedy genre, shows like "Yeh Jo Zindagi Hai" thrived, and

stories for children like "Vikram Betal" and "Malgudi Days" captured young audiences' imaginations.

By the late 90s, fiction shows had taken a turn with shows like Tara (1995), which was based on the ups and downs in the life of the protagonist, Tara. The series was known as the first ever Indian soap on contemporary urban women and was the first Hindi language drama series that ran for about 5 years.

However, it was in the early 2000s that we saw the introduction of certain television serial elements that became blueprints for all the shows till date. With the advent of cable and satellite television, the landscape expanded to include a wider range of genres. Producer Ekta Kapoor's influence was notable with iconic shows like "Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi" and "Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii." These family sagas gained immense popularity and were characterized by complex character dynamics.

From the mid-2000s to the present day, Indian television serials have continued to evolve.

From family dramas to mythological adaptations, these serials began to offer a wide array of genres to cater to the varied tastes of the Indian audience. Additionally, TV serials began to address contemporary social issues and provide educational content to viewers.

As television serials evolved over the years, a clear narrative of what is considered good or bad, well-mannered or uncouth started to form the crux of these characters and the storylines weaved by their actions.

Negative characters in Indian Serials

The portrayal of villains and antagonists in Indian TV serials has formed its own niche over the years. A certain dressing style, music and inner monologue has been repeatedly associated with them. While the character motivations of these villains may vary vastly, from shallow

vindictive habits to complex tales of vengeance, their portrayals appear to follow similar patterns and clichés.

TV serials have given us some very memorable antagonists over the years. Komolika from Kasautii Zindagi Kii is perhaps the most well-known among these. Anti-heroes and morally grey antagonists have also worked well in Indian TV serial narratives. For instance, Maya Mehrotra from the TV serial Beyhadh is both the hero and the villain of her own story, and perhaps the most iconic anti-hero of Indian television. Needless to say, villains and antagonists are important to the overall perception of Indian TV serials. Several shows have even been identified by their antagonists rather than their main leads.

This study aims to analyze the Indian serial 'Sirf Tum'.

About Sirf Tum

'Sirf Tum' is an Indian Hindi romantic drama television series that first aired on November 15, 2021. It went off air on September 16, 2022. It aired on the Colors TV channel, though the last twenty episodes of the series were only made available on the OTT platform Voot. The series starred Eisha Singh and Vivian Dsena in leading roles.

The serial revolves around the main leads, Suhani and Ranveer. Suhani grows up under orthodox circumstances, all the while harboring the dream to become a successful doctor. Her father is initially hesitant to send her to a co-education university for her medical degree, but eventually agrees.

Ranveer is a student in the same medical college as Suhani, and is also the son of Suhani's father's boss. He comes from a rich and affluent, albeit troubled family. Suhani's father entrusts Ranveer with the responsibility of looking after Suhani in the university, which Ranveer takes

very seriously. The serial focuses on the interaction between the two main leads, and the romance and conflicts that arise from these interactions.

The series also has several antagonists and negative characters that create trouble for the main leads. These include characters that deliberately cause trouble, as well as characters that become a problem or hindrance due to their conflict of interest with the main leads, or due to opposing values.

This study will focus on the characterization of these negative characters. The emphasis will be on their portrayal, their inner motivations and their character arcs, and the involvement they have in the overarching storyline. The study will also look into what sets these characters apart from the positive main leads, through which an attempt will be made to understand what defines a character as good or bad, positive or negative, in an Indian serial. The parameters that categorize these characters will be focused on.

Objectives

1. To understand the parameters of what defines good and evil in the Indian TV serial 'Sirf Tum'.
2. To analyse the differences in portrayal of male and female antagonists in Indian TV serials.

Review of Literature

Villains in Media

1.   Lacey Danielle Hoffman published the paper called "The damned, the bad, and the ugly: Our society's bad (and occasionally sinister) habit of using villains to label, deter, and other". It was published by Eastern Michigan University in the "Graduate Capstone Projects" and the "Masters Theses and Doctoral Dissertations" on March 3rd, 2014.

The study focused on demonstrating the effect a villain can have. For the study, two very different villains of popular culture—Theodora of Oz the Great and Powerful and the Joker of The Dark Knight— were chosen because "these characters have a wide reach among the American audience. Theodora is a one dimensional villain whose lack of depth fails to prompt the audience to think critically and perpetuates the patriarchal issues portrayed in the film. The Joker, however, is captivating because he is complex and pushes the reader to think critically about Gotham's issues." By conducting an in-depth analysis of each character, the researcher aimed to demonstrate that " these characters provide the audience with very different experiences which have the ability to change or stunt social progress."

The conclusion states that "Theodora is one-dimensional, especially in comparison to our other villains, because we never really have to question her motivation." It also states that, "Characters like the Joker get us in the habit of questioning the things we view—and, through the films, questioning ourselves and our societies—and once we are finished, he makes us more likely to be able to question other films and instances which we will encounter in our daily lives. Yet, there are too many Theodoras and too few Jokers to stimulate critical thinking." By which, the conclusion talks about the scarcity of complex and three-dimensional villains in audio-visual storytelling.

2.   Rebecca Krause and Derek Rucker conducted research on the topic "When 'Bad' Is Good: The Magnetic Attraction of Villains". It was published by the Association for Consumer Research, University of Minnesota Duluth in 2019. In this work, the researchers proposed "that

people can also be drawn towards similar, 'bad' others." They explored this in an "important consumer behaviour context – attraction to characters in stories."

The results of four different studies for this research came to the conclusion that " feeling similar to a 'bad' person can be threatening (Novak and Lerner 1968). However, across experiments and company data, we demonstrate that within stories the opposite seems true – similarity to a 'bad' story character is attractive. This has potential implications for consumer behaviour. Despite their bad behaviour, consumers seem to willingly identify with villains. However, prior work shows similarity to bad others can increase bad behaviour. This suggests villain-loving consumers might be desensitizing themselves to immorality – meaning it may be risky discovering your "dark side." "

3.   Vikrant Kishore wrote on the topic "Bollywood Vamps and Vixens: Representations of the Negative Women Characters in Bollywood Films". Published in Transgressive Womanhood: Investigating Vamps, Witches, Whores, Serial Killers and Monsters on 26th February, 2019.

This chapter of the book talks about how "Bollywood cinema has exploited the vamp's character in almost every film, characterising them as mean, seductive, coquette and vixenish, characterless and promiscuous. In Bollywood cinema, the vamps are mainly depicted as cabaret dancers, courtesans, prostitutes and girlfriends of the villains. The depiction of the vamps in Hindi cinema has followed the archetype that was set in the 1930s and 1940s and continued until the late 1990s."

In this chapter, the author examines the representations of the negative women characters in Bollywood films of the 21st century, and explores if their representation has changed from that of the films of pre-2000s. The author also examines "how Bollywood films represent the duality of good and evil, virtuous and wicked." There is also discussion on "how in the 2000s the female characters in Bollywood cinema are no more represented in terms of black and white, the new age female characters operate in the grey zone, where the role of the lead actress can be actively interpreted as the merger of the classic heroine and vamp characters."

4.   Michael Biggs conducted research on the topic "The Dark Side of The Tune: A Study of Villains". It was published in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by the University of Central Florida in 2008.

This research analyses the character arcs of major historical villains and compares them to some of the more recent dark characters. The study also looks at "the progression of the villain's role within a production and the change from the clearly defined villain to modern misfits who are frequently far less scheming or obvious." The research includes analysis of the dark references within each piece's originating production. It explores the "actors' tools, specifically voice, movement, and characterization, and their use in creating villainous characters." It also discusses "similarities in story progression for the deviant's beginning, middle, and final positions within the plot structure of a production."

The overall review of the aforementioned literature provides a varied and comprehensive exploration of the role and impact of villains in various social and cultural contexts. There has been an emphasis on the scarcity of complex villains, underscoring the importance of layered negative characters like the Joker. Some studies also offer insights into the portrayal of negative female characters in Bollywood, focusing on the shift from traditional black-and-white depictions to more morally ambiguous representations.

Women in Indian Television

1.   Shashi Kaul and Shradha Sahni conducted a study on the topic "Portrayal of women in television (TV) serials". It was published in "Studies on Home and Community Science" in 2010. The study was conducted to understand the responses of men and women in regards to the image of women in TV serials and to study the effect of these serials on them. The research was conducted with a sample of 120 respondents which consisted of 60 men and 60 women in the age group of 35-50 years. According to the study, "The modern images of the more liberated woman are not the image of the contemporary Indian women." The findings of the study talk about how the portrayal of women in television soap operas "does not depict the reality of women's role in society, for a variety of different reasons, including the illusionary characters,

the concentration on domestic and personal issues." In conclusion, women in Indian serials are misrepresented and the portrayal of an ideal woman is associated with how domestic they are.

2.   Robin Zutshi and Priyanka Pal conducted a study on the topic "Representation of women (Indian TV series) in Modern Era". It was published in 2019. The research was conducted through textual analysis of the first ten episodes of the series. An attempt was made to understand the representation of women characters in the series. The serial chosen to be studied was "Udaan-Zindagi Ki", which aired on Colors TV. The findings of the study show that "women are generally considered as weak in Indian society and looked down upon as objects. As a result, she always ends up keeping up to the expectation of society." The results of the study also conclude that "though they try to make an image where they are portraying empowering women, they still end up showing the same stereotype of what a good wife or a housewife should be."

3.   Debanjali Roy conducted a study on the topic "Reality or Myth: Representation of Women in Indian TV Serials". It was published in the "Global Media Journal: Indian Edition 3 (1)",in June, 2012. This research was inspired by the content analysis programme that was conducted by George Gerbner and his team. For this analysis, the following popular TV serials were chosen to be studied – Balika Vadhu (Colors) and Uttaran (Colors). Through this analysis, the study aims to make substantial findings regarding the media's projection of women through TV serials and soaps. According to the findings, Indian TV serials "still portray its women in meaningless piles of costume jewelry and zardosi sarees. When women of India are progressing to be IPS and IAS Officers, all these contemporary "slice-of-life" soaps are still entangled in familial plots and schemes. Even with some attempts to actually portray reality, Indian serials have not evolved beyond the monochromatic dimensions of a faithful wife and a scheming vamp."

4.   Hito Yoshida conducted a study on the topic "Womanhood in An Indian TV Series: An Audience Study on Jodha Akbar TV Series". The study was published in "Universitas Airlangga", in 2016. The research paper aimed to scrutinize the audience's attitude toward Indian TV series, namely Jodha Akbar, within the Indonesian setting. The study was conducted through qualitative research, using an interpretive approach. Semi-structured interviews were administered toward several female viewers who met several criteria that have been set by the researcher. The researcher then analysed the interview results using Ien Ang's theory about audience reception and England, Descartes and Collier-Meek theory about womanhood. It was

found in the study that "they also not only regard the main female character in the series as women; more than that, they see Jodha from the perspective of a mother, a wife and a leader figure." The researcher also concludes that "the Jodha Akbar TV series itself has successfully presented special characteristics of Indian women figures through the Jodha Bai character that makes the respondents compare this to Indonesian women figures that had lost their characteristics."

5.   Mallika Das conducted a research study on the topic "Gender role portrayals in Indian television ads". It was published in "Sex Roles 64, 208-222", in 2011. The researchers randomly selected 318 TV ads from India in the languages English, Hindi and Tamil. Content analysis of these ads was done to examine both the frequency of appearance and prevalence of gender stereotypes. The results of the study showed that there were more male central characters compared to female ones in Indian ads. According to the research, "stereotypical differences were also found in the type of credibility used by men and women, and the nature of the products they advertised and settings that males and females appeared in. Female central characters tended to be younger than their male counterparts and were more likely to be portrayed in relationship roles."

The review of the aforementioned literature suggests an existing trend in Indian television series and even advertisements, of portraying women using orthodox and stale stereotypes. Despite societal progress in real time, female representation in Indian serials and advertisements continues to idealize traditional roles, restricting women within familial and domestic frameworks. Though efforts have been made to depict empowering women, these attempts have often fallen short, and in-turn, deep-rooted expectations of women as perfect wives or housewives are reinforced, limiting diversity in female roles. While some shows of other genres, like historical shows such as "Jodha Akbar" might be successful in portraying a multifaceted and powerful female leader to even an international audience, this often doesn't apply to female characters in regular daily soaps. Most major female roles are often only restricted to the "good" complacent women and the scheming vamps.

First Look Into "Sirf Tum"

1.   Gursimran Kaur Banga published the article "Sirf Tum Review: Vivian Dsena and Eisha Singh's show is typical yet holds promise" in the Times of India newspaper on November 17, 2021.

The article reviews the serial 'Sirf Tum' based on its initial episodes. According to the article, "While the plot will unravel in its own time, the first two episodes have had some engaging moments and some instances that could have been simply avoided." The article analyses the various characters and character dynamics as portrayed in the first two episodes of the show. It also talks about the positive and negative aspects of the initial storyline. The article states, "While the show has many hook points, the characters and some instances are still typical and traditional. Suhani and her mother lacking courage to speak their mind, Rakesh not wanting Suhani to step out of the house and dressing traditionally to avoid male gaze, Suhani's grandmother taking the side of her son and reprimanding the women of the house are some examples."

<u>Methodology</u>

<u>What is Methodology?</u>

Methodology in research is defined as the systematic method to resolve a research problem through data gathering using various techniques, providing an interpretation of data gathered and drawing conclusions about the research data. In simple words, a research methodology is the blueprint of a research or study. Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about a topic. In a research paper, the methodology section allows the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability.

The two types of methods in research include qualitative research methods and quantitative research methods. This research employs a qualitative method.

<u>Qualitative research method</u>

Qualitative research is an approach in research that seeks to understand and explore the intricate nuances of human experiences by collecting and analyzing non-numerical data. Unlike quantitative research, which relies on numerical measurements, qualitative research employs methods such as interviews, focus groups, participant observations, and content analysis to gather rich, contextually detailed information. This approach acknowledges the subjective nature of human experiences and emphasizes more on the researcher's interpretation.

Qualitative research is more flexible, allowing researchers to adapt their methods based on emerging insights during the study. It aims to provide a holistic and contextual understanding of social phenomena, cultural practices, and human behavior. It is particularly valuable for investigating complex subjects where numerical data alone may not capture the depth and detail of the underlying meanings and patterns.

<u>Qualitative content analysis</u>

Qualitative content analysis is a research method designed to systematically analyze and interpret the content of textual, visual, or audio data in qualitative research. Researchers engage in an open-coding process, immersing themselves in the data to identify initial codes and create categories. This method places a strong emphasis on understanding the context in which the content is situated, enabling a nuanced interpretation of the data. It is a flexible approach that allows for the exploration of diverse perspectives and experiences. The goal is to derive meaningful insights into the underlying meanings and nuances embedded in the data, ensuring a rigorous and contextually rich analysis.

The method to be used for this paper is content analysis. In -depth, qualitative content analysis will be done in order to carry out the study and draw conclusions.

Content analysis allows for a systematic examination of how the negative roles are characterized in the Indian TV serial 'Sirf Tum.' Guided by the chosen theoretical frameworks, which are framing and symbolic interactionism, content analysis will facilitate a detailed exploration of symbols within 'Sirf Tum,' that would provide insights into the portrayal of positive and negative roles of male and female characters in Indian TV serials. Through this, trends and patterns can be identified in the portrayal of the roles being analyzed, contributing to a deeper understanding of character attributes and dynamics.

Sampling

The Indian television serial "Sirf Tum" was chosen for analysis, due to it having been concluded recently and because of its high TRP during its course. In order to avoid confusion, serials of the fantasy, religious, mythological, historical and comedy genres were not considered for this analysis, as these genres have their own sets of characters and nuances.

The type of sampling chosen for this research is convenience sampling. In order to understand the characters and characterization in "Sirf Tum", the first 50 out of 232 episodes will be viewed, owing to the time constraint. Certain moments from within these episodes will then be chosen and analyzed based on their relevance in the representation of the negative characters as well as the main leads.

<u>Theoretical Framework</u>

In research, a theoretical framework serves as the conceptual foundation of the study, offering a structured set of concepts, assumptions, and propositions. It plays a crucial role in shaping the researcher's approach to understanding and investigating a particular phenomenon. The conceptual framework within it establishes a shared understanding of key terms, while underlying assumptions guide the researcher's perspective. Relationships and propositions articulated in the framework provide a roadmap for data collection, interpretation, and hypothesis formulation in quantitative research. A well-constructed theoretical framework enhances the precision and coherence of the research design by providing a solid foundation for the study's conceptualization and execution. The theoretical framework for this research looks at the following theories-

1. <u>Symbolic interactionism</u> - Symbolic interactionism is a sociological theory that deals with the way individuals create and interpret symbols to communicate and make sense of their social world. It focuses on the importance of symbols, such as language and gestures, in shaping human interaction and the construction of meaning. This theory suggests that individuals actively negotiate and interpret the meanings of symbols in their interactions, leading to the development of shared understandings and social reality. In the context of this paper, this theory was used to understand how different symbols are associated with what defines good and evil and how these symbols differ for male and female portrayals.

2. <u>Framing theory</u>- Framing theory in media is a communication theory that focuses on how the media frames or presents information to the audience, influencing their perception and interpretation of events, issues, or topics. In the framing theory, a frame refers to the way information is presented, packaged, or structured, which influences how audiences perceive and interpret that information. A frame can be thought of as a mental filter or lens through which people make sense of complex issues or events. It shapes the way individuals understand and attribute meaning to the information they receive. In the context of this paper, the framing theory was used to understand how the Indian serial "Sirf Tum" frames or packages its portrayal of positive and negative characters.

The following symbols and elements will be studied for the qualitative analysis –

1. Motivations, Action and Justification - Motivations of characters, including that are inferred through their actions as well as the ones that they vocalize will be analysed. Actions of the negative characters and the main leads will be studied and compared to understand what sets them apart. How these actions are justified, either by the characters themselves or by characters around them will also be examined.
2. Dialogues - The tone, vocabulary and intentions expressed through the dialogues will be analysed to understand if this symbol helps in identifying a character as positive or negative.
3. Background music - The music that is played during the appearance of characters will be studied to understand if it is a symbol that helps in portraying a character as positive or negative.
4. Costumes - The dressing and costumes of various characters will be analyzed to understand if clothes are used as a symbol to signify positive or negative traits, that is, to see if costumes directly or indirectly implicate a character as being good or bad.

The content will be analyzed in terms of the nature and frequency of the symbols mentioned above, drawing inferences from them with regard to the context and underlying meanings, with the intent to understand the portrayal of good and evil, and to understand if these elements differ in the portrayal of male and female characters.

Findings

EPISODE 1-25

Summary

The series starts with the female lead, Suhani, praying for her scholarship results. She gets her results and realises she passed. She runs to her mother to tell her, but only celebrates openly when she realises her father, Rakesh, is not at home. She stops dancing and having fun the minute her father arrives from work. She is too scared to ask her father for permission to enrol in Graphic Era College, her dream university, since it is a co-ed. She asks her mother to ask him in her place. Before she can ask, however, her father leaves for an important work meeting with the wrong file, and she runs out of the house to give him the right one. Some guys outside the house eve-tease her, and her father gets upset at her for having come out of the house at all, even if for the file. He yells at her and leaves. Having had no opportunity to ask him for permission, her mother and her secretly leave for the college she hopes to get admission in, since it's the last day to collect the admission forms. She meets her friend Riya, who's a senior in the same college. Riya gives Suhani directions to the admissions office and leaves to find her crush, Ranveer.

Ranveer first gets introduced to the audience while in the gym. Later he yells at a girl publicly for offering to give him a good luck kiss, and even chases her down. He accidently pushes Suhani and ruins her admission form in the process. When he sees her cry, he arranges for new forms for her even after the office closes. His parents show up as chief guests to his football match, where it is revealed that Ranveer is the son of a business tycoon, and that he doesn't get along with his father. He only greets his mother and ignores his father. He gets aggressive and starts a fight during the football match when a couple of guys from the opposite team throw insults at his sister. It is revealed that the guys from the opposing team did so because Ansh, a

fellow student who secretly despises Ranveer, asks them to. Ranveer only stops beating them up when Suhani accidently gets in the way. Suhani runs from there and her mother comes to pick her up just then. Ranveer is asked to apologise to the guy he beat up, to which he refuses.

Meanwhile, Suhani tries to convince her father to let her go to Graphic Era College, to which he agrees to after a lot of persuading from all the family members. The next day, Suhani's father comes to drop Suhani off at college, where he meets Ranveer. He recognizes Ranveer to be his boss' son, and requests Ranveer to take care of Suhani. Ranveer officially begins to consider her as his responsibility. He apologises to Rishi and the dean of the college just so he doesn't get rusticated, and can stay back to look after Suhani. He falls in love with her simplicity and draws her sketch on his wall.

The next day when she's stuck in a traffic jam, he takes her to the college on a horse as that was the only way he could get her there on time. Ansh, Ranveer's rival, becomes a teacher's assistant just so he can sabotage her entrance exam. He exchanges her paper with someone else's to fail her. He sabotages her because he saw Ranveer's attachment to her, and wanted to upset him. Suhani finds out she failed and is disheartened. Ranveer barges into the dean's office and demands for Suhani's paper to be investigated.

Ansh celebrates her failure and Ranveer's indirect defeat. He makes his friends instigate Ranveer, who in turn attacks them. Ansh then interrupts the fight, pretending to be an innocent onlooker. Later, Ranveer's mother calls him and asks him to attend the party his father is organising for him, to which he refuses initially due to his hatred towards his father. He later agrees out of concern for his mother and the rest of the family. Later, he sneaks into the dean's office to find Suhani's papers, but gets caught. He threatens to break the trophies in the dean's office if Suhani's case is not solved. He blackmails the dean into agreeing with him, and eventually gets Suhani's admission finalised. He uses his wealth and connections to have his way. He then calls her father to tell him the good news. Her father, Rakesh, out of concern that Suhani would be studying in a co-ed, decides not to relay the news, and instead tells Suhani that they'll find a good all-girls college for her.

Ranveer ends up going to her house and reveals the truth to everyone. With the truth out, Rakesh agrees to let Suhani go to Graphic Era College if she keeps her distance from boys and drama. Suhani agrees, and Rakesh allows her to go. The next day, Ranveer gives Suhani a red-carpet welcome without making it evident that it's solely for her. He is later forced to go to his father's party. With him gone, Ansh decides to bully Suhani through his friends. He makes his friend Rocky, along with some others, rag her and bully her. She makes an excuse and manages to run from there. Meanwhile, Ranveer is caught up at the party with his family and Riya. His friends try to call him, but he's not able to pick up. At the party, Ranveer causes a scene when he rejects his father's gift for him. He tells his mother that he cannot forgive his father because of his extramarital affairs and the pain that those affairs have caused her.

Meanwhile, Suhani runs from her bullies but they manage to find her everywhere. Eventually she gets locked in a washroom with them and they compel her to dance. Ranveer shows up there and saves her. He asks her to leave and assures her that he'll handle things peacefully.

Ranveer sends Suhani out and locks himself inside the bathroom with the bullies. He beats them up on spots that are not visible on the outside. He demands that they do as he says. He gathers students in the open area of the college, and announces a special performance. He makes Suhani sit on a chair in the centre, while he makes her bullies dance around her. He announces that this was their punishment for ragging. He also announces to the entire college that Suhani is his responsibility, and so, no one should hurt her. Suhani thanks him for saving her.

Meanwhile, it is revealed that Ansh is Vikrant's (Ranveer's dad) illegitimate son. In a flashback, we see that his mother only told him the truth after he tried to kill himself. He gets into an argument with Vikrant, but does not reveal his identity. He goes home and tells his mother about his encounter with his father, and expresses his hatred toward Vikrant and Ranveer.

On the other hand, Suhani softens towards Ranveer and starts to think of him as a nice guy. Later that night, Ranveer sneaks into Suhani's house to return her mother's tiffin. Suhani sends him away before her family can find out.

The next day, a student threatens to jump off the roof of the college if his crush doesn't like him back. The girl he likes refuses him over and over, but he continues to insist. Suhani climbs on the roof to stop him from jumping. Ranveer brings the girl up to the roof as well and asks her if she likes the guy. She says no. Ranveer then compels the guy to jump, since he's been rejected. He scares the guy, and even pulls him off the roof with him. Both land safely on a safety net, which Ranveer had arranged prior. He reveals for all drama to be a ploy to get the guy to realise his mistake. He praises Suhani for her bravery. Later, Suhani tells him she doesn't want more drama in her life, as she only wants to focus on her studies.

Later, when Ranveer helps Suhani in a class, Ansh spreads rumours about them dating. This upsets Riya. She gets perturbed and even throws chutney on some of the people gossiping. Suhani decides to push Ranveer away from her, as his presence around her is giving her a bad name in the college. Meanwhile, Ansh instigates Riya and plants ideas of Ranveer and Suhani's relationship in her head.

The next day, Ansh makes posters of Ranveer and Suhani in a compromising position together, which they got in by accident, and puts them all over the college. This incident becomes a big deal and everyone in the college starts to mock Suhani and gossip about her. In response, Suhani goes to Ranveer and asks him to stay away from her. She tells him she doesn't need him to take care of her. Ranveer protests but lets her go, reluctantly.

Riya clears everything with Suhani. She is relieved to find out there's no affair between the two, and cheerily invites Suhani to the freshers party in the canteen, hosted by the seniors. She reassures Suhani that all the banners have been removed. While at the party, Ranveer desperately tries to strike a conversation with Suhani, but fails to. He later discovers that she has a fever, and compels her to take medicine. Meanwhile, Ansh, with his friends, spikes her

food with drugs. An inebriated Suhani gets up on stage and starts to insult Ranveer. Ansh films her entire intoxicated speech on his phone. She continues to go on and on, insulting Ranveer and talking about herself. She tells everyone about her strict father, her mother and her dream. She then blames Ranveer for the posters.

She later passes out, and Ranveer takes her to the infirmary. When she gains consciousness, she blames Ranveer for drugging her, which hurts him. Meanwhile, Ansh uses his connections to make sure her video goes viral, and even arranges it so that the video reaches her home. Suhani gets upset seeing the viral video. Later, Suhani's vindictive aunt brings the video to her home, hoping to get her into trouble.

Suhani goes home worried, and her aunt plays the video. Her family gets majorly upset. Her aunt starts to yell at her. Her father is about to hit her, but Ranveer shows up and stops him. He reveals to the family that she was drugged. He also shows the rest of the video to the family, in which Suhani is praising her father. He makes Rakesh realise how much Suhani values and respects him. His message works, as Rakesh apologises to Suhani and they reconcile.

After Ranveer makes sure that everything is fine at Suhani's place, he starts his hunt for the students that drugged Suhani's food. He finds a video of Rishi and Rocky mixing the drugs in Suhani's food. He finds them and starts to beat them up. Ansh interrupts the fight, and finally agrees to being the mastermind behind everything wrong that happened with Suhani. They fight each other aggressively. Ansh admits to hating Ranveer and his privilege, though he never reveals that he's Ranveer's half-brother. Suhani and the dean of the college break up the fight.

Later, when Suhani tries to talk to Ranveer, he ignores her, as she had accused him of drugging her earlier. She runs after him to apologise to him, but he ignores her. She ends up spraining her leg while chasing after him. Him and Riya immediately tend to her and take her to the infirmary, where Ranveer treats her wounds. He is later called to the dean's office because of the fight. He initially refuses to apologise to Ansh and the dean, but relents in order to prevent his mother from apologising in his place.

After college, Ranveer and Riya come to drop Suhani to her house. Suhani's family requests them to join them for dinner and they do. Ranveer charms Suhani's mother, brother and grandmother. Meanwhile, Ansh yells at his mother for apologising to Ranveer and the dean.

The next day, Ranveer learns that Suhani has an important project and her attendance is compulsory. He goes to her house in an ambulance. He also takes along one of Suhani's friends, Meeta, with him. Suhani's family agree to let her go in the ambulance with him. On the way, they see a broken-down car. In the car, there's a pregnant lady screaming in pain. When they realise there's no time to take her to the hospital, Ranveer, Meeta and Suhani prepare a makeshift operation theatre in the middle of the road, using the equipment in the ambulance. The woman's husband puts up a fight, calling them fakes and scammers. In order to stop the guy from disrupting the operation, Ranveer ties him to his own car. They deliver the baby successfully, and then release the husband. The husband apologises for his bad behaviour, after which Ranveer offers to drop them to the hospital.

Meanwhile, Riya goes to Ranveer's house and tells the entire family about her true feelings for Ranveer. She also admits that she doesn't know if Ranveer likes her back.

SYMBOLS

Motivation, Action and Justification

Ranveer (Male Protagonist) –

- In his first appearance, he is seen doing a headstand at the edge of the college roof. His very first actions convey his unconventionality, daring, and rebellious spirit.

- He chases a girl after she suggests she give him a good luck kiss. He also gets into a brutal fight with a bunch of guys during his football match after they insult his sister. His primary motivation throughout his episode is his anger.

  However, in the same episode, he arranges for admission papers for a crying Suhani, who is a stranger to him at that moment, because he was the one who accidently tore her previous papers. He also treats the wounds of the guy he beat up, as he's an assistant at the college infirmary. These actions display a sense of responsibility.

- He disrupts a marriage procession and borrows the groom's horse for Suhani to reach the college on time for the entrance exam. He returns the horse later. He repeatedly threatens his friends in every other scene, and never even apologises for it. He gets aggressive when it comes to Suhani. He orders them around and makes them do things for Suhani, such as organising her welcome or keeping an eye on her when he's not available. All of these disruptive and aggressive actions are motivated and justified by his newfound love and sense of responsibility toward Suhani.

- He sneaks into the dean's office to find her test papers, and even blackmails the dean. He threatens to break all the trophies in the office, and even warns that he'll never participate in any intercollegiate. He is not afraid of consequences but only wants Suhani to get what she deserves. He breaks the rules repetitively, until Suhani gets admission. These actions are considered ethically wrong, but he justifies these as his love for Suhani, and his quest to get her what she rightfully deserves.

- He personally calls Suhani's dad to tell him that Suhani passed her entrance exam. He even goes to Suhani's house when she doesn't reach college on the first day. He informs her parents in person. He goes out of his way solely for Suhani.

- He publicly smashes a glass model of the apartments his father wished to gift him on the ground. It can be considered an immature act, which involved creating a scene in front of a large number of important guests. These actions were triggered by anger. He justifies these actions to his mother by stating his hatred and distaste towards his father.

- He beats up Suhani's bullies privately and threatens to give them a public beating if they don't do as he says. He makes them dance publicly and humiliates them, even announcing it as their punishment for ragging freshers. He uses force and violence to get his way, and justifies his actions with his belief of tit for tat (you get what you give).

- He sneaks into Suhani's house late at night just to return her tiffin. He justifies this by claiming that he had to come because she wasn't picking up his call. He's impulsive and reckless.

- He jumps down the college roof with a guy to teach him a lesson. Even though he'd arranged a safety net, he disregarded all safety hazards. His methods of conveying his message are dangerous, but he justifies them as being effective.

- He comes all the way to Suhani's house and protects her from her own father. He clears the misunderstanding and makes sure that her family realises that she was not at fault. He does so even after she accuses him of drugging her, since he still considers her his responsibility.

- He is upset with Suhani, but still helps her out when she sprains her leg. He also puts his pride aside and apologises to Ansh and the dean in order to protect his mother's self-respect. He is prideful and short-tempered, but puts everything aside for the people he cares about.

- He ties a guy to his own car to prevent him from disrupting his own wife's delivery operation. He does something unlawful, but only to save the woman and her child's life.

Suhani (Female Protagonist) –

- She is introduced to the audience in her home temple. She prays to pass the exam that qualifies her for medical scholarship. This shows her to be both religious and ambitious.

- She is hesitant to celebrate passing the scholarship, as she does not want to upset her father and grandmother. She does not ask permission from her father to attend a co-ed college, and asks her mother to do it instead. She cries when she upsets her father by stepping out of the house uninformed. Her actions are driven by her need to please her father, and out of fear and respect for him.

- She sneaks out of the house with her mother to collect admission forms for her admission, even though her father had not consented yet. While most of her actions are driven by her father's wishes, she justifies defying him because her dream of becoming a doctor holds the highest position of priority in her life.

- She is mostly quiet around Ranveer. Although she finds him weird, she doesn't tell him anything, since her father had asked him to take care of her. She calls him names behind his back but listens to him upfront. She agrees to ride a horse with Ranveer to go to college so she can reach on time for the entrance exam, though she is visibly uncomfortable. She is willing to tolerate anything for her ambition and her father.

- She uses her smarts to escape the seniors bullying her. She resists the bullies and doesn't give into their demands to dance. She fights them in spite of being surrounded and even bites one of them to escape. She cries out of fear, but also defends herself. She tries to use a rock to defend herself. She is mostly quiet out of fear and respect for her father, but is not complacent.

- She climbs onto the college roof to save a guy she barely knows. She tries to convince him to not jump. She even climbs the edge, risking her own life. Her actions are purely driven by her need to save a life.

- She asks Ranveer to stay away from her, though she started to care for Ranveer, and cries after distancing herself from him. She admits to her mom that she didn't like saying it, and feels upset since she did. But she remains steadfast in her decision as she prioritises her studies and her dreams over Ranveer.

- She praises her father even after being drugged. She holds no ill feelings toward her father for being strict or keeping her under a lot of restrictions. She understands that her father does what he does to keep her safe.

- She stands up even on a sprained foot, to help Ranveer and Meeta in delivering the baby in the middle of the road. She ignores her pain in order to fulfil her duties as a medical student.

Ansh (Male antagonist)-

- Ansh schemes to sabotage Ranveer from his very first appearance on screen. He asks his friends to instigate and pick a fight with Ranveer, which they do. He doesn't get directly involved, and watches from the sides.

- He becomes a teacher's assistant for the entrance exam to sabotage Suhani. He wants to hurt Suhani to get to Ranveer, though she is innocent and not involved in any of his problems. He only does this because he hears Ranveer's friends talk about Ranveer's attachment to Suhani.

- He even prepares a 'Happy Unhappiness' cake to mock Ranveer after Suhani fails, and makes a celebration out of it with his friends. His hatred for Ranveer decides most of his actions for him.

- He asks one of his friends to bully and rag Suhani to the point that it compels her to quit the college. Again, he does not participate in this actively. His sole motivation and justification for this is that this act will hurt Ranveer.

- He gets into a heated argument with Vikrant after he sees Vikrant insult another waiter and call him an impure orphan. He stakes his own job as a waiter over that argument. He does this since he's Vikrant's illegitimate son and feels those insults personally.

- In a flashback, he tries to kill himself when his mother refuses to tell him his father's name. He claims to go to extreme lengths as he despises his nameless existence. He is desperate to know his father's name, as he believes that's an important part of his identity. He begins to hate Vikrant after he discovers Vikrant deprived him of this identity. He starts hating Ranveer by extension.

- He puts up posters that could destroy Suhani's reputation all over college, only to irk Ranveer. He doesn't care about what it would cost an innocent girl.

- He drugs Suhani so that she can humiliate herself, and also films her in an inebriated state and makes the video go viral. He also makes sure the video reaches her house. He crosses every limit to sabotage her, solely to hurt Ranveer through her.

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Riya (Female Antagonist) -

- Riya calls Suhani her best friend, but leaves her alone in the college, though she is new there. She abandons a confused Suhani to look for Ranveer, who she mentally claims as her crush. Her initial actions are motivated by her attraction to Ranveer.

- She gets into an argument with a girl after the girl tries to kiss Ranveer. She even physically shoves her, an act motivated by her possessiveness for Ranveer.

- She visits Suhani before her entrance exam and helps her study, and consoles her when she fails the exam, showing her positive side motivated by her friendship with Suhani.

- She sneaks into Ranveer's room when he's not there and lies down on his bed. While this is unethical, she justifies this by calling it her future room.

- When Riya thinks Ranveer is going to rag Suhani and make her dance, she doesn't try very hard to protect her. She only asks him to stop once, and stays silent after he refuses. She prioritises his opinion of her over her best friend's safety and comfort.

- When Suhani gets upset about the rumours that students are spreading about her and Ranveer, and runs away crying, Riya does not go after her to console her.

- She throws chutney on students who are gossiping about Ranveer and Suhani. She gets impulsive and violent when it comes to Ranveer.

- She helps Suhani after she gets drugged. She also helps out when Suhani sprains her ankle. In both cases, she was with Ranveer. It can be deduced that she is more helpful to Suhani when Ranveer is around.

- She cries to Ranveer's family when she realises that Ranveer might not like her back. She tells the entire family that she loves him, without even discussing the matter with Ranveer first. She does not think about how everything will play out between his and her families, in case things don't work out.

Dialogues

Ranveer-

- "Mere dil mein dimaag nahi hai, isliye jo dil mein aata hai, wahi karta hoon." *(Translation: My heart doesn't have a brain, so I do what my heart says).* He says this while justifying his aggressive reaction to the girl that tried to kiss him, admitting that he doesn't reason before he acts.

- "Bahot hui sharafat. Ab toh zimmedari ko zid maan kar hi chalnah padega." *(Translation: That's enough with being decent. Now I'll have to treat my responsibilities with adamance).* These are his words before he breaks into the dean's

office, making this an attempt at justification. He claims to do this in order to fulfil his responsibility towards Suhani.

- "Aaj ke baad intro ke naam pe kisi ne ragging ki ya kisi ladki ki disrespect ki, toh uska haal inse bhi zyada bura hoga." *(Translation: After today, if anyone dares to rag someone or disrespect a girl, they'll end up worse than these guys).* He makes an example out of Rocky and the other bullies. He creates obvious power dynamics between him and the other students, where he puts himself in a position to make announcements and warnings.

- "Zimmedari hai woh meri. Jo usse takleef dega mein usse takleef dunga." *(Translation: She's my responsibility. I'll hurt all who hurt her).* He says this after he kicks his friends for not taking care of Suhani while he was away. He is demanding and rude to his friends, but they allow it as he does it because of his love for her.

- "Zaroorat padi, toh dean se baat kar ke tumhari extra class lagwa dunga." *(Translation: If need be, I'll talk to the dean and arrange an extra class for you).* He says this to Suhani. He knows of his influence and exerts it freely, though he hates his father, who is the reason behind his privilege. He doesn't care about what's fair, as long as he can help out Suhani.

Suhani-

- "Manzil unhi ko milti hai, jinke sapno mein jaan hoti hai." *(Translation: Only those that have lively dreams find their destination).* She is optimistic and ambitious from the very start of the series.

- "Itna bada gunda hai woh." (Translation: He is such a thug), and

"Woh atrangi sa ladka, Ranveer." (Translation: That weird guy, Ranveer).

She labels Ranveer as weird and thug even after he helps clear out her entrance exam confusion, because of his unconventional methods and violence. She does bother to understand the reason behind his violence and is quick to judge him even after he helps her repeatedly.

- "Inhe please maarna mat, warna pure college mein tamasha ho jayega." *(Translation: Don't beat them, or it's going to become a big deal in the entire college)*. She asks Ranveer not to beat up her bullies, as she doesn't want the news to spread and for her father to find out. Her education holds the highest priority for her, and the incident might upset her father, which might make him withdraw her from the college.

- "Bas Suhani. Aaj se no tamasha. Tu college apna sapna pura karne aayi hai, uspe focus kar." *(Translation: Enough Suhani. No drama, starting today. You need to focus on your dream, that's why you come to college).* She says this to herself. She has a clear destination and idea in mind, no matter how many changes take place in her life, or no matter how many obstacles she undergoes.

- "Yeh college, yeh padhai, yeh sab kuch mere liye bahut important hai." *(Translation: This college and this education is very important to me).* She says this to Ranveer, finally voicing out her fears regarding what his unpredictable antiques might cost her someday. While she had always harboured these fears, she had never told them out loud before.

Ansh

- "Chidta nahi. Nafrat karta hoon usse." *(Translation: I am not annoyed by him, I hate him).* He says this in his very first scene in the show, signifying his hatred for Ranveer.

- "Agar Ranveer tumhare peeche itna pagal nahi hota, toh tumhara naam bhi is list mein hota." *(Translation: If Ranveer wasn't crazy about you, your name would have been on the list).* He taunts Suhani out of her hearing range, admitting to having sabotaged her entrance exam for Graphic Era College, just to spite Ranveer.

- "Teri takleefon ka mein aise hi tamasha banata rahun ga, because that makes me happy." *(Translation: I'll make a show out of your misery, because that makes me happy).* He says to Ranveer behind his back, after Suhani fails.

- "Jab jab woh insaan mere saamne aata hai, I just lose my mind, Maa." *(Translation: Every time that man comes before me, I just lose my mind, Maa).* Here he is referencing Vikrant. He talks about how seeing Vikrant and Ranveer living lavish lifestyles irks him, as he believes all of that is his right too, since he's Vikrant's older son.
He blames Ranveer for his misery, even though he hasn't wronged him and doesn't even know of Ansh's connection with him.

- "Uska naam, uska paisa, uski properties, uska business, yahaan tak ki uske bete ki khushiyan, sab le kar rahoonga." *(Translation: I'll snatch away everything. His name, his money, his property, his business and even his son's happiness).* Here he's talking about Vikrant. He believes that everything that belongs to Vikrant and even Ranveer is his right, and he wishes to snatch it 'back'.

Riya-

- *"Jo cheez sab ko pata hai usse announce nahi karna padta."* (Translation: You don't have to announce what's already known to everyone). She says this when someone tells her to announce her relationship with Ranveer publicly. She believes she has every right on Ranveer without asking him in the first place.

- *"Welcome to your future room."* She tells herself this after she sneaks into Ranveer's room without his permission. She is certain that she will marry Ranveer.

- "Agli baar apni gandi zubaan se Ranveer ka naam mat lena." *(Translation: Don't take Ranveer's name with your dirty tongue ever again)*. She says this to the guys who are gossiping about Ranveer and Suhani. She only defends Ranveer against them, and does not even mention Suhani, who is supposedly her best friend.

<u>Background Music</u>

<u>Ranveer-</u>

- In most of his appearances in the first 25 episodes, the main title song of the series plays in the background. The song has soft male vocalisation and romantic lyrics. The song appears more frequently after he falls in love with Suhani. This might signify that almost every appearance of Ranveer on screen associates him to Suhani, whether or not she's in the scene.

- In moments of action, such as in during all his fight scenes and when he rescues Suhani from bullies, a hyped, perky guitar riff plays in the background, making his actions seem cool.

<u>Suhani-</u>

- The same background score plays for Suhani throughout the 25 episodes. It has a gentle female voice without lyrics, just soft Indian classical harmonies and instrumentation.

Ansh-

- The same background score plays for Ansh throughout the 25 episodes. It is jarring, low and intimidating music, with harsh instrumentalization.

Riya-

- The same background score plays for Riya in the initial episodes. It has a gentle female voice, with western influences and instrumentation. After the first five episodes, though, there is no specific background score for Riya. The same music being used for the rest of the scene is used for Riya.

Costumes

Ranveer-

The following are some of Ranveer's outfits from episode 1 to 25. Repeated outfits are omitted.

He doesn't have a distinctive colour choice or type, and he wears both single-layered and double-layered outfits. His clothes are fairly western and casual at all times.
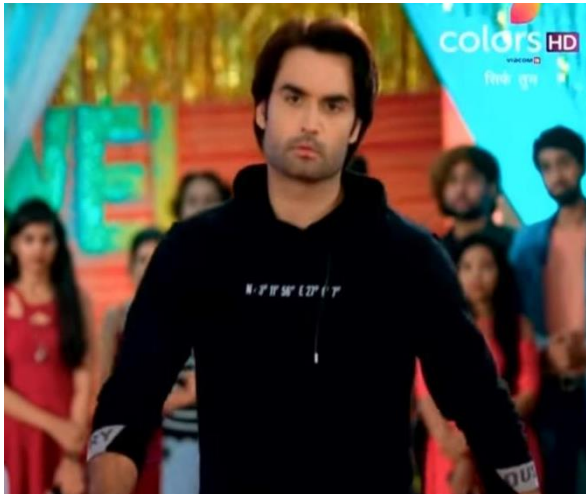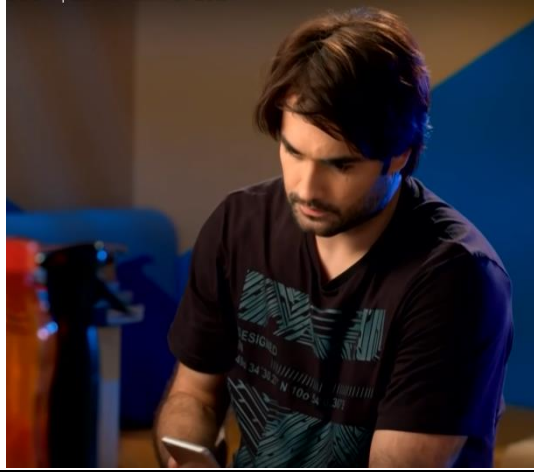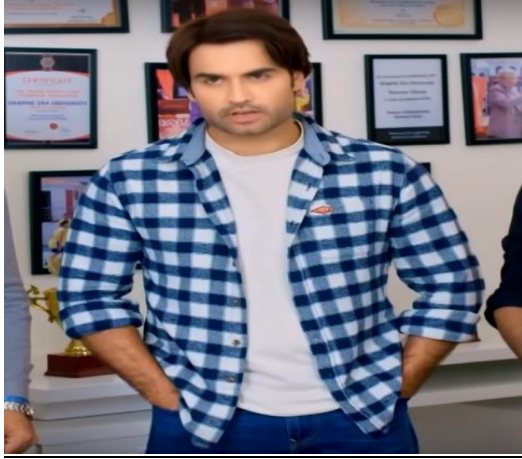
Suhani-

The following are some of Suhani's outfits from episode 1 to 25. Repeated outfits are omitted.

She is consistently wearing a specific style of Indian traditional clothes (shalwar kameez), with majority being in dull colours. Some contain floral motifs. She ties her hair back in a simple low pony.

Ansh –

The following are some of Ansh's outfits from episode 1 to 25. Repeated outfits are omitted.

He doesn't have a distinctive colour or style. His clothes are fairly western and casual at all times.

Riya-

The following are some of Riya's outfits from episode 1 to 25. Repeated outfits are omitted.

She wears casual western clothes, with light or bright colours. She always leaves her hair open.

EPISODE 26-50

Summary

After the road incident, Ranveer brings Suhani to college. He takes care of her and feeds her. He even lets her vomit on his shirt when she feels nauseous. While taking her home, Ranveer fixes her band aids and gives her a medicine chart and time table for her leg. At her house, Suhani tells her mother about how Ranveer took care of her. She is touched by his efforts.

Meanwhile, Ranveer's family reassures Riya that they'll figure out who Ranveer loves. As promised, when Ranveer comes home, his mother starts to question him in a friendly banter. Finally, Ranveer relents and tells her that he will show her the girl in his life if she comes to college.

The next day, Ranveer takes his mother to college. There, he points at 'the girl in white' and tells his mother that he likes her. In an unfortunate coincidence, both Riya and Suhani are wearing white, and Mamta, Ranveer's mother, mistakes Riya to be the girl Ranveer likes, not Suhani. She is elated to find this out. She tells this to Riya as well. Later, she goes home and fixes Ranveer's alliance with Riya, without confirming with Ranveer. Meanwhile, Rakesh accidently hits Asha, Ansh's mother, with his scooter. It is revealed that he knows her, and he takes her home. He tells his family that Asha is the reason he got a job with Vikrant. Asha tells the family that her son Ansh is also studying in Graphic Era College.

In college, Suhani finds out that Ansh is the reason behind all the bad things that happened to her, and she yells at him. Ansh does not respond, as he is scheming to get on her good side and use her against Ranveer. Riya tries to talk to Ranveer, but fails. In Ranveer's house, Ranveer's family fixes the engagement date to be the next day, after learning that it's an auspicious day. Coincidentally, the next day also turns out to be Ranveer's birthday, so the family plans to surprise him with the engagement on his birthday. Suhani and her family find out that it's Ranveer's birthday the next day, when they overhear him talking to his mother on the phone.

It is revealed to the audience that he hasn't celebrated his birthday in fifteen years, since something traumatic happened on his birthday. In a flashback, a teenage Ranveer hears of his father's affair with another woman, and sees his mother get physically and verbally abused by his father. This infuriates an adolescent Ranveer, who disrupts his own party and sends his friends back home.

Meanwhile, Ansh finds out that his mother knows Suhani's family personally and gets happy, hoping to use this connection to his advantage.

Owing to her family's insistence, Suhani calls Ranveer to wish him on his birthday. He invites her to his birthday party, and her family agrees to send her. Ranveer also confirms to his mother that he'll be coming home for his party, though he only does this so that he can introduce Suhani to his family at the party.

Suhani bakes a cake and knits Ranveer a scarf for his birthday. She comes to Ranveer's party with her grandmother and cousin. At the party, Riya finally reveals to Suhani that her crush is Ranveer. She also tells Suhani that she and Ranveer are getting engaged. Suhani gets disheartened upon hearing this, but doesn't say anything. Unbeknownst to Ranveer, his family is planning his engagement behind his back. Ansh also comes to the party with his friends, hoping to watch the drama unfold.

Ranveer wears the scarf that Suhani made for him. When Riya tries to take it off, he gets mad at her. Later, for the cake cutting ceremony, Ranveer holds Suhani's hand and brings her to the table, asking her to cut the cake with him, which shocks everyone around him.

Ignoring this, his father announces Ranveer's engagement to Riya. Angered, Ranveer throws away the rings and grabs his father's collar, blaming him for ruining every birthday. He tells his mother that it wasn't Riya he was pointing at in college, but someone else. He's about to take Suhani's name, but stops himself. Suhani guesses the truth, and leaves the party with her family. Vikrant sends the guests home, and later yells at his wife for the misunderstanding.

Riya leaves the house heartbroken. She drives back home, but gets into an accident on the way. Suhani rushes to meet her at the hospital, but she yells at Suhani and taunts her. Ansh provokes Riya later, telling her to reveal Suhani's name to Vikrant.

Ranveer gets drunk after the events of the party. In his drunken state, he ends up at Suhani's house. She manages to send him away with his friends before her family can see him.

Ranveer goes to meet Riya in the hospital. Her dad yells at him. Riya sends Ranveer away and calls Ansh, asking him to execute their plan. She and Ansh are revealed to be conspiring together against Suhani. Ranveer calls Suhani, but she doesn't pick up.

Ansh shows up to Suhani's place with his mother. His mother offers to drop both of them to college. Suhani leaves with them, but later she tells Ansh's mother about how Ansh makes her uncomfortable. His mother advises them to sort their differences, and leaves. Ansh then tells Suhani that it was actually his friend Rishi who was behind everything, but that Ansh took the fall for his friend to protect him from Ranveer. Suhani believes his lie and goes with him to college.

In college, Ansh provokes Ranveer using Suhani, unbeknownst to her. Ranveer beats up Ansh, while confessing his strong feelings for Suhani. Riya brings Vikrant there, and he hears the confession. Riya then tells Vikrant that Suhani is the daughter of his employer, Rakesh.

Ranveer tries to talk to Suhani, who tells him to stay away from her. She tells him that his feelings, his impulsiveness and his violence can sabotage her dream of becoming a doctor, and she can't afford that.

Vikrant calls Rakesh to his house and insults him. He accuses Suhani and Rakesh of honey trapping Ranveer, which hurts Rakesh greatly. At home, Rakesh declares that Suhani should discontinue her education, with no further explanation. He yells at everyone and storms out.

Ranveer finds out that Suhani will not be continuing college, and worries, since her internals are starting from then. He goes to her house when Rakesh isn't there, and insists that she go to college with him. Her family is initially against it, but later realize he is right and that Suhani's future is at stake. Suhani's mother sends her with Ranveer, against her husband's wishes.

Suhani comes to college for her internals. Riya calls Rakesh and tells him about Suhani. Rakesh comes rushing to college to take Suhani home, but Ranveer stops him and begs him to let Suhani write her paper. Rakesh gets a heart attack, and Ranveer rushes him to the college infirmary, and arranges a cardiologist. After her internal exams, Suhani finds out about her father and rushes there.

Ranveer finds out that Vikrant had insulted Rakesh, and rushes home. He compels his father to apologize to Rakesh. When Vikrant refuses, Ranveer threatens to call the media and disown him publicly. With the fear of his reputation being ruined, Vikrant apologizes to Rakesh. Rakesh gets better, his self-esteem finally restored. Suhani's family thanks Ranveer and returns home. At home, Rakesh tells Suhani that he acted out of fear earlier, and apologizes to her. He allows her to resume college.

In college, some of the medical students are picked to go attend to some injuries in a highway accident. Suhani is one of them. Ranveer is asked to lead the team. Since the bus is full, Suhani, Ansh, another student and some ward boys go in the ambulance. Ranveer goes ahead of the bus on his bike. On the way, the ambulance is caught in a landslide. It starts to fall downward. Ansh opens the ambulance door. He pushes Suhani aside to save himself. He jumps out, and the ambulance falls into a river. Suhani is dangling from a cliff, after which she falls into the river. Ranveer jumps after her. He finds Suhani and brings her to shore. Once both have composed themselves, they find the other classmate, Meeta, and the ward boys who were in the ambulance. They treat their injuries using supplies that had fallen down the cliff with the ambulance.

They all camp in the woods, waiting for a rescue team. In the woods, Ranveer and Suhani have a heartfelt conversation, where he reveals to her that the reason for his short-temper is his father. They clear out their differences and become friends. The next morning, they are rescued. The dean tells Ranveer that he'll be felicitated for his bravery. Their pictures are also published in the newspaper, speaking of Ranveer's courageous endeavor.

SYMBOLS

Motivations, Actions and Justifications

<u>Ranveer-</u>

- He lets Suhani vomit on his shirt when she feels nauseous. He does not display any visible signs of distress or disgust after the fact. Instead, he reassures her that it's alright.

- In a flashback, it is shown how teenager Ranveer throws away his cake and refuses to celebrate his birthday after seeing his dad abuse his mom. Even as a teenager, he doesn't care about what his friends would think, or his reputation in general. He only cares about his mother and the torture his father put her through.

- He holds his dad's collar in public, destroys his own birthday party and almost openly calls out Suhani's name as the one he loves, in the party. He uses his anger to justify his impulsiveness repeatedly.

- His first instinct is violence. He pushes Ansh when he sees him come to college with Suhani. This is even before Ansh started provoking him. After Ansh riles him up, Ranveer monologues about his love for Suhani, while beating up Ansh. With every word, he tries to justify his violence against Ansh as an act of love.

- He is pushy with Suhani in spite of her insisting that she doesn't want to talk to him. He holds her hand tight enough for it to hurt, even if unintentionally. He continues to try and talk to her even after she explains how his presence could hurt her dreams.

- He pushes his friend John out of anger, after Suhani asks him to stay away from her. He's volatile, and sometimes acts without thinking.

- He blackmails his father and forces him to apologize to Rakesh for having insulted him. He uses his father's need to keep up a clean image against him. He goes as far as summoning a press conference as a weapon. He uses twisted methods, but for the noble reason of restoring Rakesh's self-esteem.

- Ranveer - He jumps off a cliff to save a drowning Suhani, not caring about his own life.

Suhani

- Her birthday gift to Ranveer is a self-embroidered scarf and a homemade cake. Even her gifts are traditional and handmade, and reflect selflessness with the time, effort and patience she put into it.

- She convinces her grandmother to let her cousin, Nikki, come to Ranveer's party with them, in spite of having been sabotaged by Nikki and her mother earlier, when they displayed her viral 'inebriated speech' video to the entire family. She forgives easily and is kind-hearted.

- Her first instinct after figuring out that Ranveer might be in love with her, is to panic and cry. She is more focused on her dream to become a doctor, and fears that her father will put an end to all of it if he found out.

- She tells her mother everything, regarding Ranveer's behavior towards her ever since his birthday party. She also tells her mother about Ansh and how he wronged her. She is honest with her mother.

- She is able to vocalize to Ansh's mother that she's uncomfortable with Ansh, without showing hesitancy. She also waits until she's out of her house to do it, so as to not make it a big deal. She thinks of everyone's reputation, even her bully and his mother.

- She believes Ansh instantly when he tells her that Rishi was the one who pulled all the pranks on her, not him. She believes in second chances, and gives people the benefit of the doubt.

- She comes to the college even after her father prohibits her. Though her father's orders are law for her, she is willing to defy them for the sake of her education and dream.

Ansh

- He has no remorse even after Suhani says to him that he almost destroyed her future with his pranks. Instead, he continues to scheme further and finds ways to use Suhani against Ranveer.

- He hugs his mother after finding out her connection to Suhani's family. His mother says that he hugged her like that after many years, which implies that he does not show his mother any affection. Even while hugging his mother, he's scheming against Ranveer.

- He offers to help Riya reveal Suhani's name to Vikrant, using her heartbreak as a weapon against Ranveer and Suhani. He feigns sympathy and manipulates Riya by pretending to care for her.

- Ansh compares his life to Ranveer. He compares Ranveer's clean, large and decorated home to his average one, lamenting that Ranveer's privileges actually belong to him. He uses this sense of depravity to justify all his twisted actions towards Ranveer and Suhani.

- He uses his mother's connection with Rakesh to get closer and talk to Suhani. He manipulates and blatantly lies to Suhani and throws his friend Rishi under the bus, blaming him for all the pranks, just to present himself as the good guy before Suhani.

- He pushes away Suhani, while trying to escape the ambulance during the landslide. Instead of trying to save her along with himself, he pushes her away as if she were a hindrance.

Riya

- Riya dismisses Suhani's handmade scarf as cheap. She insists that Ranveer discard it, and gets upset when he doesn't. She is materialistic and superficial, as well as controlling with Ranveer.

- She gets into an accident while she was preoccupied with thoughts of Ranveer and him rejecting her. Her obsession with him makes her careless.

- She yells at Suhani and accuses her of having lied to her, and does not believe Suhani even when she tells her that there's no affair between her and Ranveer. Riya loses her trust in her best friend almost instantly. She almost reveals Suhani's name to Vikrant in the hospital, even after he threatens to hurt the girl Ranveer likes.

- She agrees to take Ansh's help in revealing Suhani's name to Vikrant, and willingly becomes a part of his scheming against Suhani.

- She follows through with Ansh's plan to uncover Suhani's identity as Ranveer's love interest. She tells everything to Vikrant about who Suhani is, including her family background, and all about Rakesh. Never once does she consider the feelings of her

former 'best friend', Suhani. She also does not think about what Suhani's family might face after this. She merely acts out of envy and desperation for Ranveer.

- She gets happy when Vikrant tells her that he humiliated Rakesh and made sure he'll never let Suhani step foot out of the house. She doesn't think of her former friend's family and how welcoming they were (barring Rakesh) to her. They treated her as family, and that thought does not cross her mind. She even thanks Vikrant for insulting Rakesh.

- Riya calls Rakesh to tell him that Suhani is in college, when Suhani comes to attend her internals against his wishes. She deliberately gets Suhani in trouble, knowing well about Rakesh's temper.

- She cries because the newspaper published a picture of Ranveer and Suhani, fearing that people would talk about them together now. She forgets that the context of the picture is that Suhani survived a landslide accident and Ranveer almost died trying to rescue her. She is only focused on the fact that the two were photographed together. This shows her priorities.

Dialogues

Ranveer-

- "Mein tumhare liye koi bhi takleef bardasht kar sakta hoon, par tumhe takleef mein bardasht nahi kar sakta." (I can take any pain for you, but can't see you in pain). His selfless behaviour towards Suhani has been a defining trait of Ranveer's character from the time he met her, but here he voices it to her for the first time, cementing in words what he'd already displayed in action.

- "Jazbaat aur daulat hamesha sahi insaan pe karch karne chahiye." (Translation: Spend your emotions and wealth on only the deserving). He says this to Suhani. He is emotionally reactive to only a few people, including his mother and Suhani.

- "Tu jaanti hai mein kitna impulsive hoon, gussa aa jaata hai mujhe. Phir bhi tu bura maan kar baithi hai." (Translation: You know I'm very impulsive, I get angry easily. And yet you're still upset with me). He says this to Riya because she's upset with him because of the scene he created at his birthday party, regarding his engagement with her. It can be understood that Ranveer expects people around him to accept his temper and act accordingly, instead of putting in efforts to change his own attitude.

- "Mar kar bhi uska kehlana chahta hoon mein." (Translation: I want to be called hers even after death). He says this to Ansh, about Suhani, while beating him up for making inappropriate comments towards her. This shows his extent of love and obsession.

- "Maa ka dard mera gussa ban gaya. Apne samne kuch galat hote hue nahi dekh sakta. Khud pe kabu nahi, toh gusse pe kaise kaabu karun." (Translation: My mother's pain became my anger. When I see something unfair or wrong happen in front of me, I lose control of myself and my anger).
  Here, when he and Suhani are stranded after the landslide accident, he opens up to her. He explains that Vikrant's infidelity and abusive behavior towards his mother is the reason for Ranveer's anger. He confesses that his temper is his flaw, and he has trouble controlling himself when he sees something unfair or wrong happen before him.

Suhani-

- "Kisi ki life tumhare liye prank hai? Aise doctor banoge tum?" (Translation: Is someone's life just a prank to you? Is this how you'll become a doctor?) When Ranveer reveals that Ansh was behind those pranks, Suhani yells at him. She tells him that he could never be a doctor when he doesn't care for the lives of people. She is quiet but

stands up for herself when need be. She doesn't let Ranveer do all the talking for her. She also believes being a doctor requires kindness and selflessness, showing that she views her medical profession as a responsibility rather than just a job.

- "Please mujhse mera sapna mat cheeno, Ranveer." (Translation: Please don't snatch my dream from me, Ranveer). She says this to Ranveer, when he tries to talk to her in spite of her avoiding him. Though she'd started to harbor positive feelings for Ranveer earlier, she fears his feelings for her might destroy her dream of becoming a doctor, as it might upset her father. All her life decisions are governed by her dreams, and dictated by her father.

- "Woh Meeta aur ward boy bhi missing hain." (Meeta and the ward boys are still missing). These are her words to Ranveer while she is dangling from a cliff. This is after the ambulance falls off a cliff due to a landslide. Meeta is her classmate. She's concerned about others even when her life is at risk. She says the same thing even after Ranveer retrieves her from the river and she regains consciousness.

- "Tumhara gussa na, tumhe sahi galat ka fark bhula deta hai." (Translation: Your anger makes you forget the difference between right and wrong). Suhani tells Ranveer that his only flaw is his anger. She thanks him and praises him for saving her life during the landslide, but is also honest enough to call him out on his temper.

Ansh-

- "Aur Ranveer ka tamasha shuru. Enjoy the show, guys." (Translation: And here starts Ranveer's drama. Enjoy the show, guys). He says this to his friends at Ranveer's birthday party. He enjoys watching the chaos unfold in Ranveer's house, feeling no sympathy for the misery that Ranveer, Suhani and Riya are experiencing. His sole justification for this is that the Oberoi mansion (Ranveer's house) and all its privileges belong to him, hence Ranveer can have no part in it.

- "Tujhe pata hai kya, Suhani ki dress ka size?" (Translation: Do you know Suhani's dress size?) He says this to provoke Ranveer. He resorts to making inappropriate comments about a girl just to make sure his plan falls into action. He makes lewd remarks towards Suhani to get a reaction out of Ranveer. She is not a person to Ansh, but only an object he uses to hurt Ranveer.

Riya-

- "Agar usne mana kar diya toh mein bilkul handle nahi kar paoongi." (Translation: If he refuses, I won't be able to handle it.) She says this to Ranveer's entire family. She cries to them, earns their sympathy and makes sure that they are on her side in the matter.

- "Aap ki office mein ek mamooli se manager hain woh." (Translation: He's just a manager in your office). She says this to Vikrant, when she reveals Suhani's identity to him. She's referring to Rakesh here. Her use of the word 'mamooli' (ordinary) shows that she's class conscious. She never considered Suhani and herself as equals, though they used to be friends.

- "Ranveer Suhani ke peeche khai mein kud gaya hai." (Translation: Ranveer jumped down a cliff after Suhani). She tells this to Vikrant when he calls her to ask about what's happening at the landslide site. This shows Riya cares more for Ranveer. She seems to be concerned for Ranveer and annoyed that he tried to save Suhani. She shows no concern for her former best friend, Suhani's life.

- "Aur iss waqt meri saari khushiyan Suhani ke paas hai." (Translation: Right now, Suhani has all my happiness). She says this to Vikrant. She says this after she sees a picture of Ranveer and Suhani in the newspaper, in relation to the landslide accident. She complains that Suhani 'has' Ranveer while she doesn't. In all this, she doesn't once think about the fact that her former best friend has survived a life threatening situation.

<u>Background Music</u>

<u>Ranveer</u>-

Background music for Ranveer is the same as it was for the first 25 episodes. The title song plays in the background in most scenes. With the exception of action scenes, where the same perky guitar riff plays.

Suhani-

The background music for Suhani is the same as it was for the first 25 episodes.

Ansh-

The background music for Ansh is the same as it was for the first 25 episodes.

Riya-

A more dramatic instrumentation plays for Riya in these episodes, especially in scenes where she is crying over Ranveer (which is almost every other scene). There are no vocals. The background score used for her in the initial episodes does not show up at any point in these episodes.

<u>Costumes</u>

<u>Ranveer</u>-

The following are some of Ranveer's outfits from episode 26 to 50. Repeated outfits are omitted.

The same as in the earlier episodes, he doesn't have a distinctive color choice or type. His clothes are fairly western and casual at all times, except during his birthday party, where he wears a formal suit.
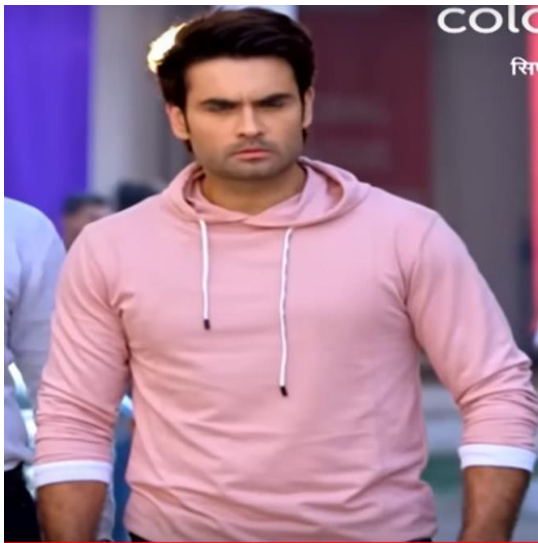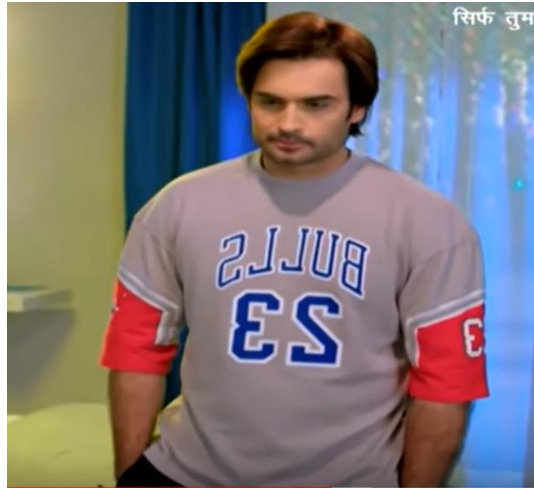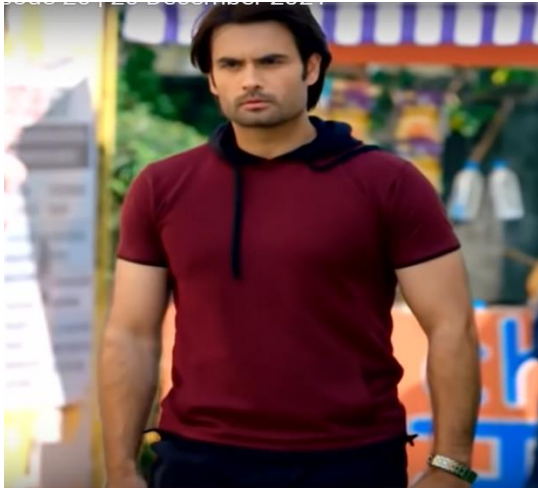
Suhani-

The following are some of Suhani's outfits from episode 25 to 50. Repeated outfits are omitted.

The same as in the earlier episodes, she is still donning the same style of Indian traditional clothes (shalwar kameez), with majority being in dull colors. She still ties her hair back in a

simple low pony. Her costume style is the same even for Ranveer's birthday party. She still dresses simply, even for events.

Ansh-

The following are some of Ansh's outfits from episode 26 to 50. Repeated outfits are omitted.

The same as in the earlier episodes, he doesn't have a distinctive color choice or type. His clothes are fairly western and casual at all times, except during Ranveer's birthday party, where he wears a formal suit.

Riya-

The following are some of Riya's outfits from episode 25 to 50. Repeated outfits are omitted.

The same as the earlier episodes, she wears casual western clothes, with light or bright colours. She always leaves her hair open. She normally wears tops and jeans, but she wears a dark coloured gown on Ranveer's birthday.

Analysis

Actions, Motivations and Justifications

From the observations made In the research, certain observations can be drawn. Firstly, it can be discerned that each of the four characters' actions are based on one or two primary motivations. For Ranveer, his actions are mostly driven by his anger, as well as his love for Suhani and his willingness to do anything for her. Suhani is driven by her dream to become a

doctor, and to not disappoint her father. Ansh is driven by his hatred towards Ranveer and Vikrant. Lastly, Riya is driven by her love and possessiveness for Ranveer. While there are other things that sometimes dictate the actions of these characters, the aforementioned reasons are the most prominent. The characters also use the same reasons to justify their actions.

Dialogues

For Ranveer, his dialogues are usually laced with a sense of power or violence. He makes announcements, demands and also orders people around a lot of the time. The only exception to this is when he talks about Suhani. His love for Suhani comes out in both, soft concerned words as well as passionate monologues. Suhani, on the other hand, seldom speaks. She only speaks up when it's related to her dream of becoming a doctor, or when she's trying to help people. Almost every dialogue of Ansh's refers to Ranveer, his hatred towards him and his urge to destroy him. Oddly enough, most of Riya's dialogues are about Ranveer or towards Ranveer too, but in her case it's regarding how much she loves and needs him.

Background music

While a soothing classical background track plays for Suhani, more upbeat-sounding songs and music play for Ranveer. Riya does not have an established background music, as the music for her scenes changes throughout the episodes. However, as the episodes progress, her background music becomes progressively more dramatic and tense. Ansh's background music is harsh and tense from the very first episode, and remains consistent.

Costumes

Ranveer and Ansh's costumes don't follow a distinct pattern, and both follow a more or less western styling for their outfits. Suhani and Riya's costumes differ greatly though. Suhani wears traditional clothing throughout the series, while Riya resorts to more casual western outfits all the time. These styles never overlap throughout the course of the episodes.

Conclusion

Certain conclusions can be drawn from the research.

For the male characters, their motivations and justifications set them apart the most, as positive and negative. Both Ranveer and Ansh have done violent and questionable things, so their actions exist somewhere between the realm of good and evil. What pushes these actions to either side is their motivation and justification. For instance, Ranveer gets violent and beats up people when it comes to Suhani. His love for Suhani and his need to protect her is portrayed as a positive motivation, thereby making his actions positive too. He disrespects his father, an act normally frowned upon, but his justification is that his father's illicit affairs make him unworthy of respect. He creates a big scene each time he wants things to go his way, and in the end, his way turns out to be the right way, thereby justifying those moments. He literally breaks into his dean's office, but that's because he's motivated by his need to get Suhani her rightful admission in the college.

Meanwhile, Ansh also gets into fights and causes drama much like Ranveer, but his motivation is hatred, and a need to sabotage and destroy Ranveer and his father. Since this motivation is negative and rather misplaced, Ansh's actions are portrayed as purely negative. Though he was wronged by Vikrant, his motivations cannot be justified as Ranveer and Suhani are innocents that bear the brunt of his vengeance. The difference between them is that Ranveer only extracts vengeance from those who've wronged him and his loved ones, and not anyone related to that person.

Their dialogues solely reinforce their actions and reveal their motivations, and don't add a new dimension to their characterization. Rather, they just add onto the characterization that the actions, motivations and justifications provide.

The background score plays an important role in their portrayals, especially in setting the tone. For instance, when Ranveer gets into a fight or hits someone, his background music creates a perky and inspiring tone, painting Ranveer's actions as positive and heroic. However, for similar actions, Ansh's background music paints him out to be a dangerous and negative character.

The element of costume does not play any role in their characterization. Both of them dress in a similar sense, in casual westerns. They also don't stick to any particular colors or shades. Hence, the series does not use physical appearance to set up apart positive and negative male characters.

For the female characters, the series does not use actions to establish Riya as a negative character right away, as she starts off as a supporting role. Her actions start to reflect her negativity only much later in the series, when she actively starts to scheme against Suhani. In the case of Suhani, actions and motivations establish her as a quiet, simple, obedient and ambitious girl from the very beginning. Almost all her actions are driven by her medical studies, her father's orders or her attempts to help people. All of these actions and traits are deemed desirable by characters around her, establishing them as positive traits.

In order to set Suhani apart from Riya from the start, the series uses the difference in appearance. To contrast Suhani's extremely traditional appearance, Riya's costumes are bold and western. The costumes are used as a symbol to indirectly establish Riya as Suhani's opposite, inherently making her the Yin to Suhani's Yang.

Music does not play much of a role in setting them apart. While Suhani has a distinct classical Indian background score for her appearances, Riya's background music is not established or consistent. Their dialogues set them apart well, even if not immediately. Suhani's dialogue mostly references her dream of becoming a doctor, while Riya's reference her feelings and possessiveness for Ranveer.

Here, it can be noted that while Ranveer's love for Suhani is painted as a positive and desirable attribute, Riya's love for Ranveer is portrayed as obsessive and delusional. Both characters harbour one-sided love, but are portrayed very differently for it. A woman's love is portrayed as the cause for her downfall while a man's love is portrayed as passionate and desirable.

Moreover, while love drives Riya to do unethical things, hatred drives Ansh to do the same. Additionally, Ansh's actions are portrayed as well thought-out schemes while Riya's are impulsive and spur of the moment, driven by her feelings for Ranveer. It can be said that the

series associates a woman's negativity with her impulsive passion and envy, while it associates a man's negativity with his deliberate hatred and need for vengeance.

Also, the distinction between Indian traditional and western is made between the female characters, but not the male ones. The age-old trope of traditional and righteous positive female characters, and western and fashionable vamps is upheld even in this series, disappointingly.

In conclusion, it can be said that good and evil in the series were portrayed using all the symbols-

- Actions, motivations and justifications
- Dialogues
- Background music
- Costumes

However, not all symbols were used equally for all characters.

It can also be seen that the series treats its male and female villains very differently, especially in the elements that it uses to portray and establish them as villains. It makes distinct, trite, physical frames to view the female characters, both good and evil. However, there are no such frames for the male characters, and their good and evil qualities need to be inferred through other, less obvious elements.

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